

and China and Japan. And he is a poet. In his head, then, is a substantial amount of the lore, the precisions, pretensions, and play of Western science, philosophy, and art. But wandering offers new images, as well as the savvy of seamen, loggers, fishermen, peasants, and women everywhere, which enter to reweave the content of mind/no mind. It is all made present here. "We are all immortals/& the ground is damp."

If the weave is to become vision, become a way by which a man may be born, deliver himself to himself, then beyond himself, it must find a technique of becoming, a discipline for allowing. The discipline is found in Japan, where many things mingle and are welcome. The wandering turns inward for a decade of attachment to a Zen temple, of commitment to one of the most rigorous ways yet evolved "... to simplify the mind; like a blade which sharpens to nothing." Simply, with the lean simplicity of calligraphy, Zen, with its focus and methods, is made to occur in this book.

Weave becomes vision. The weave seen is a weave of kinship. The vision emerges richly detailed: men as kin, in one house, related to all that has its being there. Not the relating of men each to all in a damp brotherhood of wail and woe. But kinship as resonance, vibrant presence that reaches from beginning to now to beyond, a resonance indistinguishable from the substance it sings.

The beginning is tens of thousands of years of human, of our, experiences buried under the word "primitive." Still the resonance reaches us. Voice has carried it, voice speaking poem/

song. Seer has painted it. And it becomes necessary to speak of brother and sister to adequately speak the relationship of those whose living was/is shaped by response to that resonance. If you are of that dance, *Earth House Hold* will reintroduce you-your ancestors, an ancient honorable lineage of lovers of the mysteries, who preserved them for us, and still do, while we hunted.

In Snyder's opinion, "we are now experiencing a surfacing (in a specifically 'American' incarnation) of the Great Subculture which goes back as far perhaps as the late Paleolithic. This subculture of illuminati has been a powerful undercurrent in all higher civilizations. In China it manifested as Taoism, not only Lao-tzu but the later Yellow Turban revolt and medieval Taoist secret societies; and the Zen Buddhists up till early Sung. Within Islam it emerged in the Sufis; in India the various threads converged to produce Tantrism. In the West it has been represented largely by a string of heresies starting with the Gnostics, and on the folk level by 'witchcraft.'

"Peasant witchcraft in Europe, Tantrism in Bengal, Quakers in England, Tachikawa-ryu in Japan, Ch'an in China. These are all outcroppings of the Great Subculture—the tradition that runs without break from Paleo-Siberian Shamanism and Magdalenian cave-painting, through megaliths and Mysteries, astronomers, ritualists, alchemists and Albigensians, gnostics and vagantes, right down to Golden Gate Park."

This book is a bow: a harmony of presences arced around a central thrust, the whole thing taut and ready

to happen. Ready to take us inside where live the images that truly govern us, linking together into a total definition of reality, and of appropriate response. From that inscape, it becomes easy to understand the title of the main piece of persuasive prose in the book: "Poetry and the Primitive; Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique."

Survival is the actual problem when "the soil, the forests and all animal life are being consumed by . . . cancerous collectives; the air and water of the planet is being fouled by them." But attention is always diverted from our relationship with our earth to our relationship with each other, and we give the name revolution to the comfortably familiar and loud skirmishes for power within the social structures we have thrown up. However disruptive of social order these skirmishes may be, they are not truly revolutionary, for they occur firmly and wholly within the conflict metaphor that dominates human conceptualization as the most powerful synthesis of our experience as animals. Within that metaphor, strategy has been a constant: dehumanize the other so you may do with him as you like. The dominant technique also has been constant—recourse to magic: summon the Name, substitute it for a Person, and lo! the person becomes Other, becomes Pig, becomes Freak. The new Nigger is anyone, especially anyone young, who challenges established authority and pattern. The magic of the Name permits men who inhabit the same land, speak the same tongue, worship the same god, to club, shoot, and gas Freaks to the applause of a substantial citizenry. In such a confrontation the side with the guns always ends up committing most of the atrocities, thus surrendering its moral authority, and is ultimately replaced. An old story: the loud revolutions, inevitable, but circular unless something more happens.

Under the noise another kind of revolution moves toward evolution, and toward redeeming the sacrifices and suffering inherent in man's very survival as a being. The soft revolution: the thrust to find ways to change the images by which we define ourselves, others, relationship, process. The mix of archetypal drama and encultured name that truly rules us. Revolution that seeks the restructuring of mind and its means. The remaking of our tongues. The redemption of all we have been, both glorious and vile, awake and asleep, by taking at last the step to man—a creature who will not violate event with abstraction, whose sanity will be based squarely on the

(Continued on page 59)

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by David M. Glixon

MORE SPANGLISH

Each of the missing words is the Spanish for the word at its left, as well as an English equivalent of the word at its right (for example: *sea* MAR *spoil*). Items for this quiz were independently suggested by Ann Gulsvig's class at Westwood Jr. H. S., St. Louis Park, Minn., and Rosalie Carr's class at the Sylvania, Ohio, H. S. Respuestas on page 61.

choral	_____	sea	rather;	_____
	_____	skeletons	first	_____
eat	_____	likely	royal	_____
	_____	champ	sand	_____
end	_____	fish organ	sound	_____
greater	_____	city head	smooth	_____
heavy	_____	tomb	tail	_____
I throw	_____	repetition	tea-like	_____
net	_____	crimson	drink	_____
pair	_____	normal	there is	_____
	_____	value	willow	_____
	_____		without	_____
	_____			poker stakes
	_____			genuine
	_____			sports area
	_____			child
	_____			sophisticated
	_____			soft drink
	_____			wife
	_____			fodder
	_____			gravy
	_____			moral wrong

Fiction

THE RECKONING

by Richard M. Elman
Scribners, 184 pp., \$5.95

RICHARD ELMAN'S THIRD NOVEL of the Yagodah family is as poignantly bitter as the first, *The 28th Day of Elul*, and as fragmented as the second, *Lilo's Diary*. A diary-chronicle of a man approaching the end of his life, *The Reckoning* bears the unmistakable Elman stamp: a painful honesty that makes you squirm with discomfort.

It is also a historical novel, set, like the first two, in the town of Clig, Hungary, in 1944, just before the Germans (ironically, hardly ever mentioned) move in to occupy the area. As an example of how a historical novel can come alive, Elman's book is a class of its own. *The Reckoning* takes us into the same story situation as the first two books—which were told, respectively, from the viewpoints of Alex, the son, and Lilo, his cousin-fiancée—and now that we see how it looked through the eyes of the father, Newman Yagodah, we are reminded all the more of the challenging Durrell-like approach Elman has undertaken.

Newman's diaries reveal a pompous businessman, sensitive yet insensitive, neutral yet smoldering, efficient yet foolish. While the world burns around him he works on his monologue, *The Abolition of Poverty*, an intelligent but altogether pointless analysis of Europe's social and economic problems. He declares, "When my manuscript is completed, I must act." His personal financial charts are equally ludicrous. And the deceptions he must undertake to keep his Jewish wife, Ilona, from discovering his gentile mistress, Ileana, consume much of his energy.

While Newman's family presses him, he agonizes over not knowing what to do. He wants to bribe his Christian neighbors but finds himself blackmailed. He can neither think nor act heroically. "It's as if one were pleading with a dream to cease, as if one could stand beyond a nightmare and beg to be left unmolested by it." When it hits him, it hits hard; but he breathes on, trying to live, business as usual. Yet, for Newman Yagodah, the looming blood-red tomorrow is never as bad as what goes on inside his head.

His outpourings may be compared to Alex Portnoy's. Newman is a compendium of weaknesses: he is sneaky, venal, crude, vindictive. He is a Jewish anti-hero of the holocaust period. Like Portnoy, he rings true. He is flesh and blood. Newman Yagodah is bound to incite the audience of protesters who prefer a history of martyred Jewish

Fast back.



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